

# AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILOSOPHIC AND AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETIES

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

June 23, 1863,

BY THE

HON. JOHN T. NIXON,

BRIDGETON, N. J.

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PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE AMERICAN WHIG AND PHILOSOPHIC  
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CLIO HALL, June 23d, 1863.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be tendered to the HON. JOHN T. NIXON for his able and eloquent Address delivered to-day, and that a committee be appointed to solicit a copy for publication.

PROF. J. T. DUFFIELD,  
S. P. STEARNS,  
F. W. EARLE,  
Committee.

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WHIG HALL, June 23d, 1863.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the HON. JOHN T. NIXON for the able and eloquent Address delivered before the two Societies this morning, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

PROF. H. C. CAMERON,  
ROBERT SLOSS,  
W. W. CURTIS,  
Committee.



## A D D R E S S.

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GENTLEMEN OF THE PHILOSOPHIC AND AMERICAN WHIG  
SOCIETIES:

I HAVE come here to-day, at the request of the American Whig Society, to pay the debt, which every Alumnus owes to his Alma Mater, and to the ingenuous youth, gathered within her halls for instruction and training. Twenty-two years have well-nigh passed, since the speaker stood upon this platform, as many of you stand to-day, to take his leave of Professors and classmates, and to bid adieu to the joys and sorrows, the pleasures and disappointments of college life. Then, just such a tumult of emotions filled his breast, as now fills yours. After years of quiet student-life, he found himself standing upon the verge of that great, noisy, active world, in which he was so soon to become an actor, and the near approach of which awakened in his soul, alternately, those apprehensions of failure, and that confidence of success, in the battle of life, which are now struggling for the mastery in yours.

Since then, twenty-one successive classes, numbering in the aggregate thirteen hundred and eighty young men, have radiated from this centre of learning to all parts of the land. They have not been idle spectators of the passing events. You will find them, with their armor on, in every vocation of life: in the Halls of Congress; upon the Judges' bench; at the sacred desk; administering State governments; upon the battle-field; in the counting-house; upon the farm,—discharging well or ill, their several callings, as they remember or forget, the lessons which they once learned here; most of them, as we dare to hope, nobly performing the solemn duties, which every liberally educated man owes to his race, his country, and his God.

I deem it as well an especial honor as a grave responsibility, to have been selected from among this number, to address you at this honored seat of philosophy, learning, and religion; where in days gone by, as now, the fields of science have been enriched by patient culture; where the spirit of patriotism has been nurtured, developed and strengthened by daily lessons; where so many minds have been beautified and adorned with the accomplishments of various learning; and where religion has disfranchised the soul from error and prejudice, and enlarged its sweep and comprehension by communion and companionship with God.

I desire to congratulate the honored Board of



Trustees, the reverend Faculty of the College, and you, my young friends, that whilst the desolations of a wicked Rebellion overspread the land, overwhelming so many literary institutions, or crippling their growth and usefulness, Nassau Hall yet stands in the large proportions of her ancient strength, still yielding and adding her annual tribute to the intellectual wealth, patriotic sentiment, and moral glory of the Republic.

I am not here to-day, young gentlemen, to indulge in that cynical spirit, which advancing age sometimes engenders; to overcast the sunshine of your youth with the shadows of life's trials, life's disappointments, and life's illusions; nor to crush your gushing aspirations by portraying the emptiness of human ambition and glory. I have rather come to welcome you to life's arena; to bid you God-speed in all your efforts to achieve something worthy of yourselves and your opportunities; to take you by the hand as you are walking out from this camp of instruction, to the severer duties of the field, and to give you such counsels, as a limited observation and experience may suggest, to help you discharge the duties, and meet the obligations, which your peculiar privileges here have imposed upon you.

I assume, that you entered this institution to obtain a *thorough* education; not merely to cram your minds with undigested facts, but to draw out, to develop to their fullest extent, the physical, intellectual, and moral

faculties of your nature. I assume that the golden hours of your college life have been well spent and well improved; and that in the retrospect no bitter regrets of neglected opportunities arise to haunt and worry you. But assuming this, I am yet constrained to tell you, that your education has only begun; that in order to succeed on that wider theatre upon which you are entering, you must be constantly adding to your present capacities, new intellectual and moral armor; and keeping the loins of your mind well girded, your life must be a life of endurance, of expansion, and of progress. Your reading has made you familiar with Grecian History. You remember the long and painful exercises of the Palæstra; how their youth, from early age, underwent the severest training, that they might prepare themselves for the contests of the public games. Think you, that after their novitiate, they suspended all further efforts? Was not their preparation rather a life-struggle, and could any one of them hope to hear the plaudits of admiring thousands, whilst he received the crown and palm, or to be deified,\* as the victor, by poetry and sculpture, if there were any pretermission of patient and long-continued training?

If such endurance were necessary in order to succeed

\* "Palmaque nobilis  
Terrarum dominos evehit ad deos."

HORACE.



in the mere physical contests of that age, how much more is the same quality of mind necessary, to grapple with the questions, opinions, and principles, which the awakened intellectual spirit of this age has evolved for the consideration of its educated men?

Very few of us, I fear, comprehend in all their scope and magnitude, the responsibilities of the times in which we live, or, consequently, the significance of the events happening around us. We forget their connection with the past, or that they should be interpreted by the past, because we do not remember, as we should, that the present condition of the world is but the natural result of the antecedent ages; that as the race of man does not die, so the thoughts, the passions, the discoveries and the struggles of the individual, live in their influences upon succeeding generations. Thus, the student of to-day in history, knows what Moses, Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Hume, Gibbon, Allison, and Bancroft, have written. In mental philosophy, he understands what Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Bacon, Locke, Kant, Stuart and Reed have taught. In physical science, he is familiar with the discoveries of Copernicus, Gallileo, Kepler, Newton, Franklin and Henry; and in religious belief, he has the Prophets of the old dispensation, and the Apostles of the new, and greater than these, Jesus, the Christ of God, and his teachings, as interpreted by himself, and by St. Paul, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Alexander and

Hodge. In the wide and ever-multiplying departments of thought and action, he begins where the scholar of the last age ended ; and if he would fulfil his true destiny, and make his race wiser and better, that he has lived ; if he would not only diffuse a radiance over the present, but like the stars of heaven, would enlighten the dawning centuries, he must lay aside apathy and self-indulgence, and push onward through opposing difficulties, subjecting them all to the control of his imperious will.

The train of thought already indulged suggests the topic upon which I propose briefly to address you. It is "ENDURANCE, as illustrated in the lives of individuals, and in the history of nations, necessary for the attainment of any permanent good."

By Endurance, I do not mean mere stubbornness, for she is often the child of ignorance and prejudice ; nor patience, simply, which bears, without murmuring, the evils she cannot avert ; nor perseverance only, that continues in a course begun without reference to intervening obstacles ; but I mean the quality which is produced by the union of patience and perseverance.

Fixing before the mind some definite purpose, lofty enough to call into exercise the noblest faculties, I mean that heroic constancy which is not misled by passion, does not halt from self-indulgence, does not faint under disasters, does not grow weary under trials, and which is not even beguiled by triumph, but

moves calmly onward, adhering steadily to the purpose, until death closes the contest, or success crowns the endeavor.

It is that quality of the mind, which antagonizes impatience for immediate results.

Every age and country have characteristics which distinguish them from other ages and countries. If you were to ask me what was the most marked trait of this age and country, I should answer, *Impatience for immediate results*. Everybody is in a hurry. Nobody is willing to wait. The pernicious influence and effects of this spirit are everywhere felt. You will find them in the superficial accomplishments of too many of our young men; in their failures to rise to eminence from their lack of early, patient training; in the uncalculating speculations of the counting-room; in the gambling spirit of the stock market; and especially just now, in the disposition of even good men to complain of the slow movements of the civil and military authorities, and in their proneness to carp at and find fault with every effort, or want of effort, to suppress Rebellion, and with every measure put forward or withheld to protect the Government against threatened dissolution.

To this national characteristic, leading to disastrous results, I would oppose Endurance, so fruitful of permanent good.

I might detain you here and now with many exam-

ples in individual life, exhibiting how much may be accomplished under the pressure of adverse circumstances. I might speak to you of Æsop, born 2500 years ago, in the infancy of Grecian civilization, whose marvellous power in seizing upon natural objects with which to illustrate moral truths, has awakened numberless imitators in all ages, and who still stands the prince and father of Fabulists; of Terence, who first saw the light in Africa, and whose comic delineations of character not only delighted the audiences of the Roman theatre, but have charmed the scholars through all the centuries since his time; and of Epictetus, the statesman and philosopher, whose honest administration of civil government as much endeared him to the people of his own age, as his clear, steady perception of moral truth has won the admiration and esteem of ours.

These men sprung from the lowest walks of society; were all born slaves; endured every species of privation, hardship, and trial; but, surmounting them all by the stern force of an unconquerable will, they have secured their niche in the temple of fame, and have placed their names in that list of worthies whom "posterity will not willingly let die."

Or, coming nearer to our own times, I might direct your attention to the early life and character of Martin Luther, Benjamin Franklin, and Andrew Jackson; show you how they were compelled to struggle with



poverty, the world's neglect, and the discouragements of an adverse fate ; how they emerged by patient endurance, from obscurity into the proud position of earth's heroes, until the efforts of Luther emancipated the human mind from the superstitions and tyranny of a corrupt faith ; and Franklin enlarged the domain of philosophic thought, by unveiling the mysteries of nature, and Jackson shaped and moulded and controlled the destinies of a continent, by supporting, through all the stages of his public career, the fundamental doctrines of popular power.

But passing from these more familiar examples of the results of patience and perseverance, let us consider a little more minutely, the life and characteristics of two other men ; the most remarkable in some respects, which the last century produced : alike in the poverty, endurance and self-reliance of their earlier life, but widely differing in the tendencies and development of their minds, and in the impression of their character upon their contemporaries, and on succeeding times. Go back with me more than one hundred years to the town of Chumnitz, in Saxony. Enter one of the meanest hovels there, and you will find an honest hard-working weaver, struggling night and day, over his unresting loom, to provide even the scantiest support for his family. A cheerless hearth was that, where penury and want were the daily companions of the household. The eldest child, emerging from that wretchedness

years afterwards, said to the world, "My first impressions in life came from the tears of my mother, who had not bread for her children. How often have I seen her on Saturday nights, wringing her hands and weeping, when she had come back with what the hard toil of my father had produced, and could find none to buy it." Yet even in the midst of physical destitution and carking hunger of body, the mind of that boy was more hungry for intellectual food. He attended the village school, and before he was ten years old, he paid his school fees by giving lessons to his neighbors' children. Soon learning here more than his teacher knew, his next effort was to get private instruction in the Latin language, in which he at length succeeded, by agreeing with his uncle, in consideration of the fees advanced, to repeat on Sunday such portions of the Gospel, as he was able to commit to memory during the week. After studying for two years, he was informed that he had exhausted the classical resources of his instructor. He next longs for a place in the grammar school of the town. How can that be accomplished? Where are the two and one half shillings a quarter, the books and the scholar's cloak to come from? He could not ask or receive help from the father, who, having grown prematurely old and weary in his life-struggle against poverty, could have no sympathy with the son in his soul-longings and mental aspirations. The clergyman of the parish, however,



agrees to help him, and does pay the quarterly fees; but from the want of means, he is obliged, in rags and hunger, to borrow the class-books of his school-fellows, and to copy thence in advance his daily lessons. He is all alone among men. He hears no good words of encouragement and cheer. Still he works on and strives upwards. In his mind's vision, he sees above him the beckoning angels, and in their approving smiles, he reads the auguries of his future triumph. His insatiable thirst for learning, and an intense desire to raise himself from his debased condition into something higher and better, urge him forward; but, outside of these motives, he seems now to have been driven onward by a fierce defiance of Fate, and by a determined resolution never to yield in his hand to hand grapple with Misfortune.

He leaves the grammar school, and resolves to continue his studies at the University of Leipsic. He does not stop to ask how this can be done. He has no suitable clothing, nor books, nor bread; but he has five shillings in his pocket, and better than that, an unconquerable will in his heart. He goes to Leipsic. He leaves behind him a grumbling father, who, notwithstanding his ill success in life, has more faith in weaving than in scholarship; and a hopeful, anxious mother, who for years had been treasuring in her inmost soul, secretly, like Mary of old, the daily indications of his future greatness. He takes from humble servant-girls

scraps of bread to eat. He gathers learning here and there from such books as he can get access to. He walks boldly into the open lecture; and when he has no money to pay class fees, he treads softly and quietly to the edge of ill-guarded class-rooms, hoping to steal now and then a stray thought, falling from the lips of professors, upon the ears of heedless students.

Thus he passes his life to his twenty-third year; starving his body, that he may feed his mind. So earnest was he in the acquisition of knowledge, his historian says, that for six months he allowed himself but two nights in the week for sleep. The residue of his time was given to those profound investigations in philosophy and the ancient languages, which in after-years, by the confession of the literary world, placed his name in the front rank of scholars and philologists. To illustrate his tenacity of purpose, let it be borne in mind, that whilst he was thus prosecuting his studies, and when he had not enough money to buy a loaf of bread, he was offered a tutorship in a private family at Magdeburg, the acceptance of which would have relieved all his physical necessities. But it would also have involved his removal from the University. After a violent struggle, he resisted what seemed to be the seductions of the tempter to prefer ease to duty; made the choice of Hercules, and remained with his old companion, Poverty, at Leipsic. How true is the commentary of a modern essayist upon such conduct! "A man

with a half volition goes backwards and forwards, and makes no way in the smoothest road; a man with a whole volition advances on the roughest, and will reach his purpose, even if there be but little wisdom in it."

Completing his course at the University, we next hear of him at Dresden, the capital of his native country. He has been allured there against the convictions of his independent will, by the persuasions of friends and the promises of the Prime Minister. He danced attendance upon the court for more than a year; lodged in garrets or cellars as opportunity offered; and often gathered empty peas-cods, and had them boiled, as his only meal. Such patience and endurance were rewarded in the autumn of 1753, by his appointment to the place of under-secretary in the Brühl Library, at the annual salary of eighty dollars. This sum seems small to us, but it was much for the poor scholar, and enabled him to enter upon his proper career in life. The next year he prepared and published at Leipsic, his edition of Tibullus, in which he began to exhibit the fruits of his study, and his wonderful talent as a commentator of the classics. This was followed by his translation of some of the works of Epictetus, whose stoical principles had given strength and nourishment to the struggling soul of the friendless scholar.

But such works, then or now, coming into the world unheralded, and the children of obscure parentage, make slight impression upon the public mind; and not

much is said or thought concerning them, until the light of the author's subsequent reputation is reflected back upon them.

I do not propose to follow this enduring child of genius much further. Driven from Dresden by the Seven Years' War, he spent some time at Wittemburg; wandered from place to place without fixed employment; became the passive recipient of a gifted woman's love, and married her, when neither party had money enough to purchase a wedding garment; but amidst all his trials and vicissitudes he never lost sight of the great purpose of his life,—the acquisition of knowledge. After the declaration of peace in 1763, he returned to Dresden. He had not yet grown into much distinction at home, for it appears from his own statement, that upon his return he was told that inquiries for him had been made from Hanover, and no one could tell where he was. During his absence, the great Gessner, Professor of Eloquence in the University at Göttingen, had died, and the Hanoverian authorities, proud of the growing reputation of their school, were solicitous that his successor should be able to fill his chair. Application was made to Ernesti for advice and help. He knew no man in Germany fit for the place; but warmly recommended to them Rhunken, of Leyden. Rhunken wrote, declining to leave his country, but at the same time earnestly asked them, "Why do you seek out of Germany for what Germany itself affords? Why not



for Gessner's successor take *Christian Gottlib Heyne*, that true pupil of Ernesti, who has shown how much he knows of the Latin literature by his 'Tibullus,' of Greek, by his 'Epictetus?' In my opinion, he is the only one that can replace your Gessner. Believe me, there is in him such a richness of genius and learning, that ere long all Europe will ring with his praise."

How wide the companionship of man in the republic of letters! How it transcends and outgrows the limits of earth's nationalities! Rhunken had never seen Heyne, but he knew him. He had studied his "Tibullus" and "Epictetus," and had discovered in them the germs of that wonderful power, which enabled him afterwards, through the writings of the ancients, to reproduce not their language merely, but their life, spirit, character, and modes of thought.

He went to Göttingen. The professorship was offered to him and accepted, and thus ended his long struggle with his physical wants. He remained there half a century, until his death. Emancipated from the cares of life, he soon became famous in the empire of letters. Carrying the torch of philosophy into the hitherto unexplored recesses of the olden times, he opened a new department of learning by his original interpretation of classical literature. His publications, correspondence and personal influence raised the University of Göttingen to the first rank of German schools, and

when he died, not the University alone, not Saxony only, but all Europe mourned. The great men of Germany, her princes and scholars, met by appointment at Chumnitz, his birth-place, to celebrate the memory of the poor weaver's son. They visited the hovel where his old father had toiled, and in poverty died. They went to the school-room where the ragged boy had picked up, as best he could, the crumbs of learning. They walked with reverence in the same paths which his bare feet had trod. And then they uttered grand speeches to his praise. God help a world which allows the unfriended son of genius and want to die, and then spends its breath in hosannas, and its money in marble for his grave!

Whilst Germany was thus lamenting the loss of her greatest scholar, the busy brain of an humble daily toiler in the coal mines of England was working out a problem, which, if successful, he knew would revolutionize society, open to man new fields of industry, multiply and spread abroad the comforts of life, and, by bringing the peoples of different nations into closer communion, would advance the beneficent ends and aims of modern civilization. It was *George Stephenson*, trying to impart power and efficiency to the locomotive, which he found so weak and inefficient; trying to do for the locomotive what James Watt had done for the condensing engine; trying to do with steam upon land what Robert Fulton had done upon the water.



The world moved on, all unconscious of the vigils of the lonely worker. Nor science, nor wealth, nor patronage could stoop to aid the uneducated son of toil. But it was no sudden chimera with him. It had been a present thought since his earliest boyhood. Whilst yet too young to labor, he had been sent to the colliery with his father's dinner, and there had become acquainted with the old pumping engine, of which his father was the fireman. It was love at first sight; not a blind adoration of the defective engine then in use; but an intelligent anticipation of what this mighty instrument of man's progress would accomplish, when, rid of its hindrances and imperfections, and developed by human wit to its largest capacity of strength and power, it should assume its appropriate place in the conduct of the world's affairs. His earliest amusement in life was the building of engines with mud and clay. His first expressed ambition was to be an engine-man. In the history of mental triumphs, I do not call to mind a more beautiful illustration of what faith, patience, resolution, and endurance will accomplish than that furnished by the life of this benefactor of his race.

Let us look at it for a moment. Born in the humblest grade of English society, he entered the mines as a day laborer, for sixpence a day, at nine years of age. He became assistant fireman at fourteen, and such were his diligence and sobriety of life, that at fifteen he received a man's wages, and at seventeen he was pro-

moted to the high place of his earliest ambition, an engine-man. He now addressed himself to the study of the details of the engine; to a complete knowledge of its construction and mode of working; spending all his leisure hours in taking the machine to pieces, and readjusting its various parts, not only that he might understand the secret springs of its industry and power, but that he might remedy the weaknesses which impaired its efficiency, and had baffled the skill of other inventors.

He was now eighteen years of age, and did not know the alphabet. Of an inquisitive mind, he groped around for knowledge. He could learn little from the associations of his daily life, as his companions knew less than himself. He was told, that in scientific works were recorded the results of other men's labors and experiments, and, although engaged twelve hours a day in manual labor, he resolved to master the art of reading, as indispensable to his further progress. With him to will was to accomplish. Deploring his ignorance, he was not ashamed to confess it. For two years this full-grown workman sat down, three nights in the week, with the children of the laborers, in the night-school of the neighborhood, that he might acquire such a knowledge of reading and arithmetic, as would enable him to prosecute his studies alone. There are no difficulties in man's pathway that such a resolution will not conquer. Whilst other miners,

contented with their lot, spent their leisure hours in idleness, and their surplus earnings in the bar-room, he was most penurious of time and money, except so far as he could use them in enlarging the circle of his learning. He had not genius; but he had more precious gifts,—a sensible, well-regulated mind, and ingenuity, energy and perseverance to overcome every obstacle which arose in his pathway to knowledge.

Such a resolute purpose, such improvement of opportunities, and such husbandry of time, brought their reward. From an engine-man he became a brakesman, from a brakesman an engine-wright; from an engine-wright a constructor and manufacturer of locomotives. He was now in a position to avail himself of the results of his long study and observation. He had learned the defects of the old engine, and independent of scientific help, he knew how to correct them. He may have discovered no new principles in the use of steam as a motive power; but, gathering together the threads of other men's labors, he made such new applications of old principles as to produce original results. The great battle of his life was his fight for railway locomotives. He here devoted twenty years of his best energies; for he comprehended from the start, what beneficent consequences to the well-being of the race were involved in the issue of the contest. He fought it, single-handed and alone, against the prejudices of ignorance; against the bigotry of class legislation;

against the sneers of the whole body of civil engineers; against the united voice of science; against the system of fixed engines, horse-power, and atmospheric pressure, and he finally triumphed,—so grandly triumphed, that all opposition was conquered and silenced, and he stood forth, confessedly the foremost man of his times; the embodiment and centre of railroad enterprise and development; the companion of nobles and crowned heads, and the father of the locomotive railway system of the world!

But I must hasten on, and show you how this quality of endurance is illustrated, by its beneficent results, in the history of nations.

A nation is merely the aggregate expression of the individual life of a people. The personal characteristics harmonize and blend in unity, and that unity, manifesting itself in action, determines the general position and character which the community takes and bears in history. Thus Leonidas, with his three hundred men at Thermopylæ—standing in the gorges of that mountain pass, a bulwark of living hearts, to stop the overflow of the Persian tide—whilst he was revealing to all coming time the inwrought heroism of the Spartan nation, was also illustrating the individual teachings of the Spartan mother, who said to her son, “Return *with* this shield or *upon* it.”

A nation, too, has its infancy, its manhood, and its decline, and it exhibits to the world, in these respec-



tive stages of its existence, the same traits and qualities which are developed in the individual. Thus our own country is yet in her youth. Let no one think that these fiery trials through which she is passing, will consume her. She is yet in her youth, and is only emerging into a higher life, a nobler civilization; and does she not too often show the peculiar traits of the young,—boastfulness, irritability, jealousy, and sensitiveness of the world's opinion? England is now in the manhood of her career, and with the man's enlarged experience, matured dignity, and greater knowledge, does she not too often grow indifferent to human approbation or censure? Spain, once the controlling power of Europe, has become decrepit with age, and although like the aged, retaining the instincts of self-preservation, has she not in a great degree lost the power and capacity of defending her life against internal or external attack?

Now, if this be true,—if national characteristics be only the development of the individual life, it follows that the same arguments which prove the importance of this quality of endurance in order to success in the individual, apply with equal force, to prove its indispensable necessity in order to success in a nation. And here, as in the case of individuals, we are not left without instances and illustrations in past history.

You remember the Persian invasion. You have lingered over the glowing pages of Herodotus, whilst

your fancy pictured the “pomp and circumstance,” the magnificence and glory of the preparations, which the mightiest ruler of the world’s mightiest empire made to subjugate the yet infant republics of Greece. You have counted that immense army of millions, drawn from all the nations of Asia, and that fleet of thousands, manned by hundreds of thousands of skilful seamen. You have sat, perchance, with Xerxes upon the banks of the Hellespont, and seeing all the surrounding waters crowded with ships, and the plains of Abydos covered with troops, you have sympathized with him in those emotions of joy, which such a pageantry of power awakened in his soul, and have shed tears of sorrow, at the transitory nature of human things which such a spectacle suggested. You have seen the waves of the sea bridged over, and the tops of the mountain levelled; the Hellespont whipped into obedience, and proud old Athos, whose summit had been for centuries the home of celestial glories, made to bow low, until you almost trembled at these impious exhibitions of man’s endeavor to subject the elements and forces of nature to his control. You have then turned from all this display of physical strength, to Athens and Sparta,—the two cities of Greece, for the subjugation of which this extraordinary aggregation of national resources was made. You have stood with Leonidas and his comrades at Thermopylæ; and in their self-immolation, have witnessed the highest type of national



endurance, and have found the inspiration, which in the ages since has nerved the patriot's arm and strengthened his heart, to strike for liberty against the hydra-headed forms of oppression and misrule. You have gone with Themistocles up the sloping hill of the Pnyx at Athens, and have listened whilst he interpreted to that earnest, religious people the mysterious utterances of Delphi. You have heard him tell them that Athens consisted not of its walls and houses, but its citizens, and that the saving of these was the preservation of the city. Stirred by his eloquence, you have seen all men capable of bearing arms enter, with a firm and resolute step, into the wooden walls of their vessels at Salamis; abandoning homes, altars, wives, mothers, their old men and their children; the temples of their gods and the tombs of their ancestors; and shortly afterwards, in that narrow strait, moved by the stern will of such untrained sailors, and reckless of uncounted odds, you have seen these wooden walls dashed against the mighty armament which all Asia had sent for their enslavement, and scatter it here and there, as the storms and waves scatter, until hardly a vessel was left to carry back the news of the sad disaster. And you have witnessed upon the plains of Bœotia, the final failure of this great attempt at subjugation, when seventy thousand Greeks met more than five times their number at Plateæ, and after prodigies of personal valor, swept the last footprint of the Asiatic

invader from the soil of Europe. Your sympathies have been all alive in such a struggle, and you have rejoiced to learn that endurance, with desperate odds against her, can break the oppressor's rod; that an heroic constancy of purpose can eventually exhaust the most fearful resources of the tyrant; and that even infinitudes of wealth, and the despotism of physical power, are as nothing, when compared with these mightier miracles of prowess, which patience and perseverance can perform.

But this is not half the lesson, which such a contest teaches. The careful student also learns, that Persia and Greece were engaged in a conflict, which must result in the political and intellectual supremacy of Europe or Asia; that the destinies of two continents were involved; that the defeat of Persia was the end of Asiatic domination in Europe; and that henceforth, as a consequence of Grecian endurance, the European continent was to emerge from the night of barbarism, and through the influence of her laws, religion, arts, philosophy, and arms, was to control and govern the world!

Turn to another and more suggestive example in the sixteenth century,—the revolt of the Netherlands against the power and domination of Spain.

Contemplating this period of the world's history, we stand upon high ground. Behind us, lie the Middle Ages of Europe, just drawn to their close. The Ro-

man Empire has fallen; the power of Feudalism has been broken; and with their overthrow, the ancient centralization, as opposed to the spirit of individual liberty, is disappearing. The union of Church and State has produced its inevitable fruits. Through all these dark centuries the most visible facts standing out to the view, are kingly prerogative and sacerdotal tyranny. Around us, is a long-oppressed and now aroused Humanity, beginning to comprehend and to struggle for its God-given rights. Liberty is reviving. The confluent rills of a various culture are growing into a torrent. Printing has been invented, and, by the multiplication of books, learning is emerging from the cloister into the light of common day. The discovery of America has awakened a new spirit of enterprise upon the ocean, and the humanizing influence of Commerce, produced by the interchange of ideas, inventions, products, manufactures, and by personal association, is felt by nations which had been living for generations in the dull monotony of isolation. New views of religious truth are spreading over Europe. An inquiry into the relations which man sustains to his fellows, is followed or preceded, I care not which, by an inquiry into the relations which he sustains to his Maker. The spirit of civil liberty, and the genius of religious freedom, walk hand in hand over this earth, and he who attempts to divorce them, commits a crime against God and Humanity. Luther has just died in

Germany, Calvin is still living in Switzerland; but what matters it whether man lives or dies, when the truths which he utters are immortal!

And standing there, may I not add, that before us, in prophetic vision, arise the coming centuries, through which the great contest of ages,—the struggle of the individual man for his rights against the usurpations of regal and priestly power, now recommencing in modern times, is to continue, revolution after revolution, link after link in the one chain of events, until the Genius of Liberty finally triumphs; not the abstract deity of the ancients, too often, in her man-embraces, begetting anarchy, disorder, and licentiousness; but the practical earth-child of modern civilization, born of written constitutions, temperate progress, and social order; that Liberty, which not only teaches the individual to rise up before kings and priests, and say, “I am a Man; give to me the rights of Humanity!” but also induces him to add, “You are my Brother, and I will do unto you even as I would that you should do unto me.”

We see this contest open in the Netherlands. If Liberty had a home in Europe during the preceding fifteen centuries, it was in the humble abodes of this brave Teutonic race. They had been made hardy in their sharp conflicts with the forces of nature and of men. They had reclaimed their lands from the inroads of the sea; struggled bravely against the unconquerable Ro-



man legions led by the greatest Cæsar ; rebelled against Vespasian ; fought the invading Franks and Vandals ; refused to recognize the overwhelming power of Charlemagne ; gave reluctant assent to the dogmas of Popery ; hated Feudalism, and in lieu of feudal chain and papal yoke, had coveted and in some degree secured municipal privileges and the freedom of religious thought. Charles V., after abridging their civil rights, and attempting to stop the progress of the new opinions, by the fire and sword of cruel persecutions, had abdicated the throne, and his proud, cold, silent son, the most powerful sovereign of his age, menacing with his boundless treasures and well-trained armies, the independence of two continents, was now stooping to strip this people of artisans, shepherds, and fishermen, of the few privileges which the Inquisition, the spiritual courts, and the exactions of his father, had left untouched.

The Netherlanders resisted. It was the old struggle between chartered liberty and foreign despotism ; between human rights above all charters, and the lust and usurpations of unlicensed power. The odds were fearful, and to the eye of man the result not doubtful. A nation of less than three millions of people, devoted more to commerce, trade, and the arts of peace, than to war, would not seem to be able to resist the vengeance of the greatest potentate of earth ; within the borders of whose dominions the sun never set, and whose life was a continual warfare against popular

rights and the spirit of religious toleration. But there is a God in history, whose wise designs often contradict the probabilities of man's experience. For reasons which we can now understand, but which to that people seemed inscrutable, he permitted this contest to extend through nearly three generations, until the accumulated riches of years of peaceful trade were wasted; their lands impoverished; their homes destroyed; whole districts of country depopulated; their old men and their children butchered, and their wives and daughters worse than butchered by foreign mercenaries. For a quarter of a century, he sorely tried the soul of the great William and his followers, by successive defeats. He even allowed the arts of treachery to snatch away the fruits of assured triumph. Thus, having consumed the dross of their natures by long-suffering and bitter trials; having permitted their trusted leader to perish by the hands of the assassin; having removed from them all human props, that he might show them that their extremity was his opportunity, he sent to them a succession of victories; but he laid the foundations of the young Republic in tribulation and sorrow, that from the depths of their greatest national disasters, the future times might learn what undying faith and endurance can accomplish.

This great struggle, thus resulting after various fortunes, in the recognition of popular rights, and in es-



tablishing the foundations of social order, did not end in the Netherlands. In the next century it was transferred to English soil; manifesting the same heart-yearnings for civil and religious freedom; the same fearless contempt for the hereditary arts and usurpations of king-craft; the same enduring faith in ultimate triumph; and issuing, at length, in the exile of the faithless Stuarts, and in placing upon their throne, with constitutional limitations of regal power, the great-grandson of the hero who had rescued the liberties of Holland from the grasp of the perfidious Spaniard.

One century later it appeared upon a new theatre, when the descendants of these same men in America, inspired with heroic courage by such examples, and animated by the splendid results of such endurance, struck off the chains which bound them to a foreign dynasty; proclaimed to the world the imprescriptible right of man to self-government; by popular consent founded a nationality, and organized and established a government, which, notwithstanding the madness and treason of its children, restless of the wholesome restraints of law, or struggling for disintegration, will endure and live, and living, bless the coming ages!

Gentlemen, my task is done. In the survey of incumbent duties, as citizens of the Republic, and as members of society, I charge you to make a faithful application of these individual and historical examples.

Learn from them the trite lesson, often repeated and never fully comprehended, that labor, perseverance and endurance are the conditions of success in life. In the choice of your profession, and in selecting your place, as workers in society, listen not to the voice of partial or even impartial friends. Exercise for yourselves an honest and intelligent scrutiny into the capabilities of your minds; consult your tastes; ascertain what you are fit for and what you can do; obey the inclinations of an enlightened judgment, and then walk in the pathway which that marks out and illuminates. Remember, that in the great machinery of the universe,

“ Nature to each allots his proper sphere,  
But that forsaken, we, like comets, err;  
Tossed thro’ the void, by some rude shock we’re broke;  
And all our boasted fire is lost in smoke.”

Get, therefore, in the right place at the start, and resolutely, perseveringly and enduringly continue in it; and your future life, instead of being the mere snatches of an unremembered tune, aimless, jarring, and discordant, will become a full diapason of harmonious sounds, gladdening and blessing yourselves and your race.

In the present crisis of the world’s history, the educated youth of America are summoned to the discharge of most responsible duties.

An imperilled Republic, struggling for life; a human society, disturbed in all the elements of its social or-

ganization; a God-revealed Christianity, attacked at all points by specious forms of error and infidelity, appeal to you to throw aside sloth, indifference, and the seductions of ease, and to enter with all your strength into the fight on the side of duty, truth, and righteousness.

This land of ours, once realizing the simple rhyme of Wordsworth,

“Fair scenes for childhood’s opening bloom,  
For sportive youth to stray in,  
For manhood to enjoy his strength,  
And age to wear away in,”

now lies bleeding at every pore; not stricken down by the hands of foreign enemies, but in the very house of its friends.

This Government of ours—the embodiment of the rights of humanity, secured by the continuous contest of ages; the only full expression to the world of man’s capacity for self-government; the only hope and refuge in the future against the oppressions and aggressions of power—is now in its greatest peril, and perchance upon its last trial.

This society of ours, whose foundations, as we had fondly dreamed, were immovably fixed, not only in the wants and fears of men, but in their affections, through the security which it gives to their rights and interests, is now trembling and heaving to its centre by the disintegrating forces of false principles in politics and

philosophy; by an agrarian spirit, which levels distinctions, not arbitrary, but growing out of the nature of things, and necessary for the existence of social order; by a corrupting spirit, which substitutes the power of wealth for the legitimate influence of virtue and intelligence; and by an infidel spirit, which, wandering away from the simpler forms of ancestral faith, fails to recognize a constantly superintending Providence in the direction of our individual lives, and in the determination of our national destinies.

This Christianity of ours, which was aforesaid revealed as the heaven-born child of faith; as the healer of the world's maladies; as the only light in the universe which casts a radiance beyond the portals of the grave, is in danger, amid the struggles and passions of the hour, of losing her hold upon the hearts and consciences of men; and in still greater danger of being degraded into a child of earth, by having her doctrines, principles, and claims subjected to the limited and defective processes of human reason.

The country, society, and the church summon, nay challenge you, to gird on your armor; to step out upon the stage of action; to take your place, at the lead, or in the ranks, as God wills; and to do your whole duty in the conflicts which the past ages have bequeathed to us, and for the issue of which posterity and God will hold us responsible.